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A Letter to A Young Man Just Entering
College. 1849

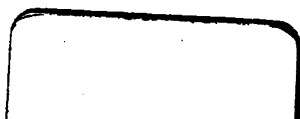


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A
L E T T E R

A YOUNG MAN WHO HAS JUST ENTERED
COLLEGE,

TO
AN OLDER ONE WHO HAS BEEN THROUGH.

*"Quisquis (per inscriptionem, viii)
in quatuor patet paginae duae."*

BOSTON:
WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS
111 WASHINGTON STREET.
1849.



A
L E T T E R

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FROM

AN OLDER ONE WHO HAS BEEN THROUGH.

*"Quaeque ipse miserrima vidi
Et quorum pars magna fui."*

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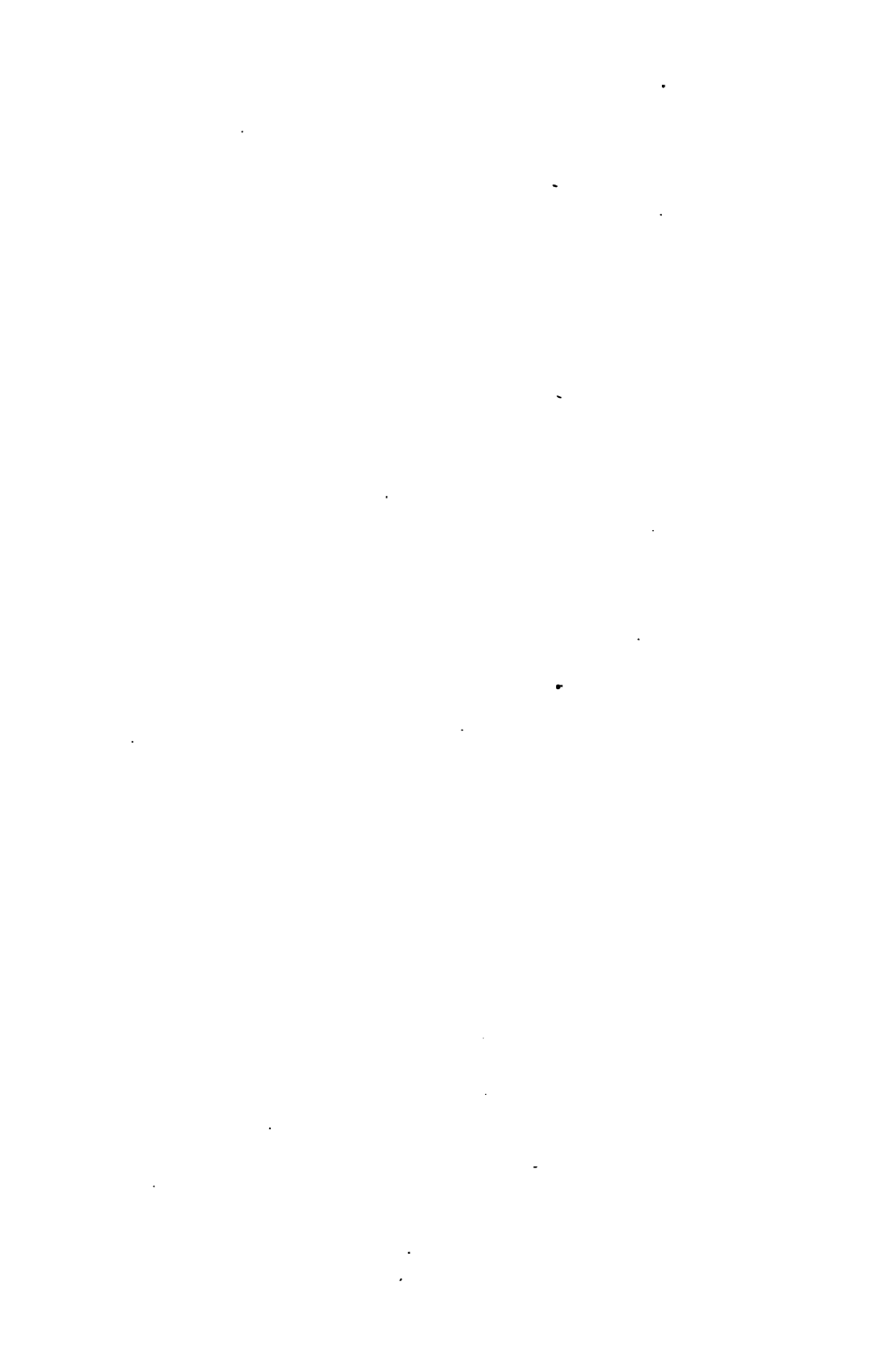
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N O T E .

THE following Letter was originally intended for a single pupil. The author became interested in his work, and, thinking it might not be unprofitable to other pupils beside his own, has had it printed.



LETTER.

DEAR N——,

It appears to me, now that you are leaving me for a position in which you will have to depend, far more than ever before, upon yourself, that I can give you a little good advice, such as was *not* given me when in the same situation, and such as I consequently had to gain by dire experience and many mistakes. In speaking from my own experience, I may not always speak to your wants; characters and wants are very different; but there are some great truths which underlie all experience. I shall probably be able to say much that you can make useful, and that you must select. Listen to advice, and take it if you think it good; but don't let it be imposed upon you, for it may not really belong to you. Some may object to this rule, as fostering presumption in young men, whose duty many hold to be obediently to follow the opinion of their elders. For my part, I value independence of character above all other qualities. A young man who goes to college is not, or should not be, too young to take charge of himself; — a charge which he is never, so long as he lives, to remit or delegate to others. Whatever else you are or are not, be *yourself*; — and so take what of my advice approves itself to your reason and good judgment,

and no more. Choose rather to be conscientiously wrong in your own way than slavishly right in another's ; but always examine others' ways, and make them your own when you find them right. With this qualification, you will be pretty sure to end in being freely right in your own way, and that I reckon the great object of life.

I intend in this letter to treat of a variety of matters that concern both your bodily and mental well-being. I shall draw much of my advice from my own experience, and shall endeavour to write such a letter as, on looking back to the time when I was in your position, I can see would have been most useful to me.

If I were asked, What is the most important rule for a young man to remember who is just entering college ? I would say it is this,— Keep your health. And if I were asked, What is the next most important ? I would say, Above all things preserve your health. And, the third time, I would give the same answer. After that may come other things. And if I were asked, What is the cause of nine tenths of the idleness, ill-conduct, and shortcomings of college boys ? I should answer, Directly or indirectly, imperfect health. And if I were asked, What is the most difficult point to accomplish in all the college course ? I should say, Not the Greek particles, nor the polynomial theorem, even though it were that of Arbogast, nor themes, nor an English oration ; but the preservation of good health. And if I were asked, What is the readiest way to the achievement of the polynomial theorem and an English oration ? I should say, Not wasting toil over the midnight-lamp, but the achievement of good health.

The problem is a complicated one. In the first place you must clearly understand that you are going to a place ingeniously contrived for the destruction of health,— to a great dyspepsia manufactory ; and, in the second, that not one

~~self~~ of those who go there with you go with perfect health ~~begin~~ with. The influences there are all against you, — ~~some~~ of the place and those of your associates and ~~com-~~ ~~panions~~. Let me justify and explain my assertions.

~~I~~ I reckon a healthy man to be, not one who has disciplined ~~his~~ body till it is tolerably useful and comfortable in an unnatural state. This is generally what is called health in our society. Meagre, thinking skeletons, walking brains, call themselves well, so long as headache allows of a reasonable percentage of labor; obese men in office call themselves well, so long as somnolence does not prevent their fulfilling the routine of official duty; fine ladies call themselves well, so long as furs and furnaces keep up a languid circulation in the current of their colorless blood, and hinder the approach of total inanition. I call no man healthy whose bodily organs are not all in a normal condition, and whose physical strength is not quite equal to all the reasonable demands of his brain. A man is one who can use his arms and legs quite as well as his head, his head quite as well as his arms and legs. This definition, of course, excludes walking brains and obese officials.

Now college is not so much a place of *education* — if it were, its tendency would be to produce *men* — as it is of *intellectual training*. Its tendency, then, is to cultivate the brain at the expense of the body. There is no provision — there cannot well be, under present arrangements — for the education of the body. Hence, if a young man does not positively fall into ill-health, yet his body dwindles as his brain grows, and both are finally shorn of their true and natural proportions. For it is a law of Nature not to be evaded, that a man's intellectual is in proportion to his bodily vigor. Let a man possess ever so great an intellect, let it be ever so highly cultivated, if he is ill or feeble, his mind shall show

the taint or the weakness. A young man shall come down to college from New Hampshire, with no preparation save that of a country winter-school, shall be examined and "conditioned" in everything, and yet he shall come out far ahead of his city Latin-school classmate; and the secret is, that in summer he has held the plough, and hoed potatoes, and made hay.

It is easy to see the difficulty, but how to remedy it? I do not think there can be a *perfect* remedy, for our college arrangements do not admit of a perfect physical training. But you can at least do much in the way of precaution, and that in several ways. In the first place, by *temperance*. I do not mean temperance in strong drink. I set down the taking of the temperance pledge as a duty both to yourself and to your neighbour, which you will probably not perform, but which I do not wish to discuss here. I mean by temperance here, first, temperance in diet generally, and, secondly, temperance in all things. The second branch of the subject may be left to take care of itself. Let me, as one who has gained wisdom by dire experience, enlarge a little on the first.

I lay it down, then, as a rule, that a young man, by care in diet alone, may make and keep himself a man, as by carelessness in that respect he certainly will make himself a dyspeptic,—that is to say, the antipodes of a man. Take care of your diet, then. Do I mean, eat bran bread, eschew flesh, and mortify your appetite on uninviting turnips? By no manner of means. I have been through—at least I have tried to go through—with all that, and know all about it. Eat plain and wholesome food, but eat *good* things,—that is, things that taste good to a healthy appetite. God meant we should have pleasure in the satisfying of our appetites, and all nose-and-pulse theories, founded on the idea of mortify-

ing the flesh for the sake of the spirit, had better be handed over to the followers of St. Simeon or Dr. Pusey, to whom they rightfully belong. Respect your stomach ; it is an essential member of the body corporate, and has its rights and dignities. Treat it well, and you will not find it ungrateful.

Do I mean, by this, pound-cake and the pastry-cook ? So many will interpret me, or would be glad to. On the contrary, a pledge against the pastry-cook — with, it may be, a proviso in favor of an occasional ice in the dog-days — would be as great a safeguard as one against the bar-keeper. The one is, I sincerely believe, only not as mischievous a member of society as the other, at least to the youthful portion of it. I mean no such perverted products of civilization. Neither do I mean coffee, though I do confess its dangerous fascinations ; nor yet tea, unless it be black, and largely qualified ; nor “ hot cakes,” nor spices, nor pickles, the last resorts of desperate appetites.* But come with me, and I will show you what I mean. Do you see in yonder beautiful valley, (we are now a hundred miles away from bricks and pastry-cooks,) by the side of that clear stream, overshadowed by magnificent elms, that pretty farm-house ? See the long row of hives, musical with bees ; see the line of lowing cows returning from their rich pasture, and the neat-

* These details will perhaps seem puerile to those who can, as we say, digest board-nails. But let it be remembered that I am not writing for them, but for those who, having but a limited amount of bodily or mental power, are bent on increasing and making the best use of both. And even to the first-mentioned class let me say, as one who once belonged to the fraternity, but alas ! does so no longer, that even they had better be careful, especially if they make any sudden change from an active to a sedentary life, — a change which is often made, and but too seldom guarded against, by boys coming to college from the country.

handed Phillis, with her milk-pail, *not* upon her head, but held by the *bail* in her hand; (for we are in *New England*, and our pails are made in Hingham;) and see my friend, the farmer, returning from his hay-field, with his rake upon his shoulder. See his firm step, his brawny arm, his sparkling eye. He will do you a day's work with any man, and yet you shall find him quite competent to explain the knotty passage in Thucydides, and better than a professor to unravel the problems that have been your despair in mathematics. But let us go and take tea with him; for that is more to our purpose now. I see through the window his snow-white table-cloth, spread with all manner of good things. Look at that magnificent wheaten loaf. I will promise it to be innocent of *saleratus*; my friend's wife would scorn the imputation. Set it down as a cardinal maxim in your dietetic philosophy, never to live, while ~~bad~~ necessity does not compel, where they make "*saleratus-bread*." Pah! the very idea offends a respectable digestion. A quaint writer, who is possessed of much homely sense, lays it down as one great essential to the domestic happiness of a married pair, that the wife should know how to make good bread. Find out a couple possessed of that element of harmony, and board with them; but I fear you will find there are ten wives who are adepts at poisoning their husbands with rich cake, to one who keeps him happy in this way.

You have not crossed the line, and have therefore taken no oath not to eat brown bread where you could get white. I advise you not to take that oath, though Father Neptune himself should demand it. Tell Father Neptune he has yet discoveries to make in dietetics, and that a certain proportion of *good* brown bread is far better for him than all white, especially if the care of his watery realms allows of his indulging in a sedentary life.

Will you be helped to a little honeycomb? I shall give you but a little. One of the most pernicious forms of a diseased appetite, especially among girls and students, (pardon the classification,) is the excessive love of *sweet* food that is so common. We are brought up on it from our cradles. As babies we are nursed on-sugar-candy, and as children we are fed on cake. I think there are more digestions ruined from this than from any other cause. Use, if you need to do so, a manly resolution in this matter. I *know* it is important.

I think, on the whole, I shall not help you to any honey. You may have, instead, some of these fine strawberries, if you will not, as many do, eat sugar flavored with strawberries, but rather strawberries and sugar. I am a believer, too, in a moderate allowance of this magnificent cream. See what butter! — yellow as virgin gold, and pure as dew. Eschew bad butter: cultivate your taste for butter, albeit its sensitiveness may often compel you to go without. I will not force you to drink milk. *Non omnes omnia*. A little good black tea shall be allowed you, provided you will not drink it too strong, if you find milk disagreeable or indigestible. But happy is the man who loves bread and milk. His thoughts shall be pure as his diet.

A student cannot eat much meat; neither can he, according to my experience, profitably go wholly without. A moderate quantity of good and well-cooked meat, once a day, should be his rule.

A fondness for fat, and rich, greasy food, is another very common form of a perverted appetite. I need hardly say that its indulgence is incompatible with ready thoughts or a clear head.

These, I know, are very undignified details to offer to one who has just arrived at the dignity of a dress coat, and who has begun — he will by and by think very prematurely —

to write himself man. But I am not so much attempting to be dignified as useful. If you neglect my wholesome advice, and choose — and 't is a hundred to one you will — to gain my knowledge by my experience, you will some day bitterly acknowledge that such matters are anything but undignified.

But is there not, when looked at rightly, a high, poetic, even religious dignity in the right care and culture of the body? Is it not the shrine of the soul, the earthy tabernacle of that spark of divine fire which animates us? Is it a subject beneath your notice, the keeping it clean and pure, worthy the indwelling Divinity? It is the delicate and marvellous instrument of the invisible Thought that animates and guides it. If you clog its wheels, and break its springs, and render it by your neglect a foul and noisome thing, be sure the Spirit of Purity will desert it; for that can use only pure and holy instruments. It is a temple whose windows shall look on heaven or hell, as you shall build it.

The dependence of the mind on the body is a matter far too little attended to. It is a universal rule, that a perfect and healthy mind cannot exist in an unhealthy body. Even genius is subject to this immutable law, and there is no broader line to be drawn in literature than that between the healthy and the unhealthy. Can you not see scrofula in Dr. Johnson? Do not Byron and Bulwer smell of gin and tobacco? (At least the latter did, till he washed himself clean of the abominations.*) How are the mighty thoughts of Coleridge

* See the remarkable letter in which he gives his experience of the Water-Cure, and compare the healthful tone of "The Caxtons" with the debauched spirit of "Pelham" and the perverted sentimentality of "Night and Morning" and its kindred. — Let me here mention, that the best exposition of dyspepsia that I have ever seen is

obscured by the fumes of that pernicious drug which was his ruin! — how many rhapsodical sermons do we not hear, the products of strong green tea! — how much unreasonableness, ill-temper, and irretrievable mistake are the result of gross eating! How many feeble, whey-faced, “interesting” young men do we not see admired as martyrs to learning, who are really martyrs to fat pork and confectionery!

I have said, Treat your stomach liberally; but I mean by that anything but abuse. And it is not to be denied that a certain amount of abstinence — far short, indeed, of asceticism — is demanded of the student. He cannot eat like a farmer, for the obvious reason that he is where he cannot hold the plough. It were better, doubtless, if he could hold the plough and have the corresponding privilege; but the one is not to be had without the other, and he must accommodate himself to his situation. While he must make the demand, then, as great as possible, he must carefully regulate the supply. There is room even for occasional wholesome abstemiousness. Goethe, a model of manly — would we could also say of moral — strength, dieted carefully while engaged on any great work. The care with which Byron endeavoured to keep free from the clogs of flesh is well known. He did everything *but* lead a pure and temperate life, and therefore had anything but success. Newton, it is said, while engaged in his calculations, did not know whether he had dined or not; but I think I should not

contained in a book, the title of which, to some, will mark it as heretical and unsound, — “Gully on the Water-Cure in Chronic Disease.” The author, however, is a regularly educated English physician; and though, in tracing all disease so exclusively to the stomach, he shows himself to be hobby-ridden, yet there is a great deal of truth in his book, which, if I can judge by my own experience in my dyspeptic days, will prove very interesting to all such sufferers.

recommend such great neglect, unless you are as great a genius.

Bear with me while I enter into a few more undignified details concerning kindred matters. And next, of exercise. "Walk for exercise? Go, kick a stone!" said a distinguished physician to me once. And, truly, the picture of a college "dig" taking a walk — no, I say not so, for he never "takes a walk," but "walking for exercise" — justifies the contemptuous estimate. See the poor fellow, fresh from his huge heap of Greek or Latin vocables, which he has just increased by another cartload, toiling now with his feet just as he has been toiling with his brain, with as little comprehension of the true spirit of his task, as little true appreciation of what lies all around him! He tears through the landscape like a locomotive, about as much in harmony with it, and with the same eye for its beauties. He is just the character to enjoy the treadmill, which perhaps might be a useful appendage to a college, not as a punishment, but as a recreation for "digs." I do not say that even such exercise does him absolutely no good: it is muscular exertion in the fresh air, but the good is reduced to a minimum.

Such exercise I do not recommend. But you say, If I cannot walk for exercise, what shall I do? I acknowledge the difficulty, and shall not attempt wholly to remedy it. It is partly inherent in your not wholly natural position. But much may be done. In the first place, if you follow my advice as to diet, you will not need a great deal of violent exercise. Many students are obliged to take much exercise in order to work off an excess of food. In this case, both the excessive food and the exercise it necessitates do harm instead of good, wearing out the organs to no purpose. But if you are strictly moderate in your diet, you will need but moderate amount of exercise, and that will be itself a

pleasure. Then you have other resources. Engage, till the attainment of the awful dignity of Junior or Senior prevent, in all the active games that are going on. Some young men, out of bashfulness, or too great respect for their pantaloons, refrain from this, and it is a great mistake. All such things promote, not only good health, but good fellowship. Make yourself acquainted with the college football, get up a cricket-match, and take a share in a boat-club, if your president is wise enough to allow them, or your classmates sensible enough not to abuse them. And then study some branch of Natural History which shall furnish an object to your walks. You will find it at every period of your life a delightful refreshment from severer studies, a key to unlock untold treasures of wonder and beauty, and a pure and elevated bond of sympathy with kindred minds. I would study some branch of Natural History, though I began with not knowing a cricket from a grasshopper, or a beech-tree from a chestnut, or a bluebird from a bobolink, — and, if you are city-bred, these are quite supposable cases. And, above all, acquire and cultivate a taste for the Beautiful in Nature. Watch the clouds, climb the hills and see the sunset or the *sunrise*, — (there is nothing more beautiful than the early dawn; I speak from personal knowledge, for I have been up and seen it since I graduated,) — study the trees, Nature's most beautiful children, and read and learn to love descriptive poetry; English literature abounds in it, and you are Bryant's fellow-countryman. But don't prate and sentimentalize. I like well some one's answer to a religionist's canting question, "Have you got religion?" "None to speak of."

I think I have provided you with exercise enough: let me pass to another undignified, but useful, theme. Water is an element with which, since I graduated, I have formed an

intimate personal acquaintance. I have used it in all except the *strong* forms, and in all save those have learned to set a high value upon it. I reckon that man no Christian, but uncivilized and a heathen, who does not bathe in cold water every morning. Observe, I speak now of *men*, and not of any of the various other classes of masculine individuals in the community, many of whom could not bear such rude and natural treatment. But even as applied to men, fully formed or yet in embryo, I must hedge my rule about with many limitations. The idea of bathing, in some people's minds, is, that it is valuable in proportion to the degree of discomfort that attends it. The more uncomfortable they make themselves with cold water, the more meritorious they think they are, and the more they think it does them good. So you see, especially in these times of half-understood "Water-Cure," poor, shivering, blue-nosed individuals hugging themselves on their superior knowledge of physiology, and firmly believing they are in rude health because they go through a diurnal penance before breakfast. I am a believer in a different philosophy, the fruit of much experience. I bathe to make myself comfortable, and on the same principle I make myself comfortable while I bathe. I have no kind of antipathy to a warm bathing-room, and when I was feeble and could not bear cold, I used warm or tepid water. I rejoice in cold water now, and therefore I use it, and it does me good. Of course there is such a thing as being effeminate, and having a Psychro- as well as a Hydrophobia. I would be manly in the use of cold water: do not be afraid of it where it hurts you not, for it will have a manly effect upon your body. But I would not turn it into an instrument of torture. The cardinal rule for its use, to be written in letters of gold on your bathing-tub and on your memory, is, *Never to sit, eat, or study, till by active*

exercise in the open air you have recovered the natural warmth of your body. With this simple precaution, and after you have *gradually* accustomed yourself to it, you can practise cold bathing in the coldest weather, and I know of nothing that has such a strengthening and health-preserving influence.

It is a mistake to suppose that it is dangerous or injurious to bathe when warm. The best time for bathing is when the body is comfortably warm. The real danger is, first from fatigue, and, secondly, from too greatly accelerated circulation. Never bathe in cold water when you are tired, or when your *heart beats*, as the phrase is.* But if you would know what real luxury is, go, some warm summer day, and beg or steal a privilege in some farmer's potato-field; take off your coat and hoe there, till you have done a piece of work you are not ashamed to have seen. Then go home, and (I take it for granted you are living in a Christian house, that is to say, a house provided with a bathing-room) take a *tepid* bath, pouring a pailfull of cold water over yourself after it.

I hold shower-baths in much suspicion. Happy they who can use them, but it is not all, or perhaps the majority. Where a bathing-room is not at hand, the bathing-pan is a much safer method, and quite as effectual. Provide yourself with a soft carriage-sponge, only not as large as your head. By turning over the stock of some not too fashionable drug-gist, you can find a good one, and they are better than the fine and costly kinds. Have nothing to do with hair gloves

* Patients in the Water-Cure sometimes go reeking with perspiration from the "packing," and plunge into water at 45°. I have myself done it for weeks together, not only with no injurious, but with the most beneficial results. The secret is, that they are neither fatigued nor excited.

and such-like instruments of torture. They are not useful, and if you desire penance for your sins, a scourge is better. If your only object is to dry yourself, and gently excite, without scratching, the skin, a towel will do that, of the kind euphoniously denominated "huckabuck."

The practice of cold bathing has one indirect effect of the greatest importance to the student. It allows him to dispense with a very high temperature in his study. It is only those who are covered with *bark* instead of skins, (many sedentary men are,) who require a study heated to 80° or 90° by an iron stove, or, what is far worse, a modern furnace. To a man in good health, and of robust habits, such rooms are not only unnecessary, but perfectly intolerable. Such men are their own stoves, and far better than any artificial ones. It is more healthful, no doubt, — or rather it is less unhealthful, — to sit in a hot room than to be uncomfortable in a cool one; but it is the best and the only healthful state to be comfortable in a cool one, and that is the case with all who have good circulations and good skins, both which blessings may be obtained by temperance and cold bathing.

Of all the ingenious contrivances for destroying constitutions, and eradicating from the community its old Puritan vigor and hardihood, a modern furnace is the most effective. Not only is it impossible to keep a house tolerably cool that contains one, but it is impossible to keep any air that is fit to breathe: so that you are not only roasted, but poisoned at the same time. It is as though your house communicated by pipes with the realms below, where we may imagine that little demons, not yet intrusted with the heavier work, serve their apprenticeship by tending your fire. Imagine a company of the kiln-dried inhabitants of a modern house taking the place of their fathers in their open boats, amid

the winter's ice, "hanging on the edge of the Atlantic" a long, cold, winter's Sunday, because they believed that the seventh day was holier than the others, and they might not land. I fear they would all have fallen martyrs to their principles.

Finally, be of Sancho's mind in regard to sleep. Give yourself seven or eight hours of good sound sleep, regularly per *night*, and not per day; you will gain far more in power than you lose in time by being liberal to yourself in the matter of sleep. But with most, this is a point that will not need insisting on.

I say nothing here about gross vice. I take it for granted you are above the reach of its temptations. If you are not, you are out of place in a college, and had better go home to your mother. You are no man till you can look temptation in the face. Yet there is a looseness of thought too common among your elders, that I have no right to suppose you guarded against, and of that I will speak. If ever there was a doctrine that came straight from the bottomless pit, it is that implied in the common phrase, "sowing his wild oats." For it involves, if it means anything, the blasphemous idea that God himself has given young men such "hot blood," that it is impossible, and not to be expected of them, that they should control it. It is a doctrine that had its birth in times when stimulants were in universal use. It belongs to the punch-bowl and the Madeira-bottle, and should not be tolerated now. What is it for a young man to "sow his wild oats"? It is to become debauched and impure in mind, hard, and worldly, and jaded,—to lose the taste for simple pleasures, the native relish of a pure mind for truth and beauty;—and what is this but to lose all that makes life valuable? Or it is to climb, by slow degrees, and through much suffering and repentance, back again to native inno-

cence; and I never yet could find the man who had trod that path, who would say he thought it a part of God's providence that all should tread it. The doctrine, when fairly stated, is too monstrous to combat, and yet you will find many a man in our worldly, unspiritual community, who practically holds it. A little vice unfits no man for becoming a hard, driving merchant. It makes him "acquainted with the world," as the phrase is; and so perhaps it does, with the world of Mammon. The price-current is a fitting grave for that heap of spent ashes, that *caput mortuum*, the soul of a young man who has "sowed his wild oats." *

But there is another reason for the prevalence of this theory, and that is, the effeminacy of the good. What is a "good young man"? He is very pale, thin, and "interesting," — wears a white neckcloth, — never fails to hear the Rev. Mr. Milk-and-Water twice of a Sunday. He is fond of the company of aunts and grandmothers, who have the highest expectations of him. He sometimes, with great precaution, mounts a *gentle* horse, — probably getting up on the wrong side. He never learned to swim; his mother always thought it too dangerous. He does n't like "horrid" guns, and besides, 't is cruel to hurt poor little birds. When he goes to college, he puts up a time-table over his mantel-piece, from which he never, on any consideration, deviates;

* To the honor of our colleges it should be said, that the cases where the example of the teacher cannot be held up for imitation to his pupils are very rare. Yet sometimes a case occurs, where even a professor needs to be reminded of the doubly base effect of his example. To him, the noble lines of the great satirist of Rome's decline might well be read for a lesson.

"Maxima debetur puero reverentia; si quid
Turpe paras, ne tu pueri contempneris annos,
Sed peccaturo obstet tibi filius infans."

as though he were a spiritual steam-engine, — which indeed he is, in respect to any appreciation he may have of the work he is about to engage in. If he does not understand his lesson, he swallows it whole, without understanding it; his object being, not the lesson, but the “mark,” which he is frequently at the president’s office to inquire about: for the “good young man” must stand high in his class, whether he belong there or not. He is never absent from college prayers, and never present in the college play-ground. He belongs to the “Society for Religious Improvement,” and to the dullest of the debating-clubs; and when he graduates, he inevitably “studies Divinity.”

Now I do not wonder that some, having this ideal of a “good young man,” and knowing of nothing between this and Pelham, should prefer the latter; for there is in Pelham at least a perverted and “subversive” kind of manliness. But there is an ideal, which is neither the “good young man,” nor Pelham. It is he who has neither lost the strength nor the simplicity of Nature, — who is manly and yet innocent, strong and yet pure, — who would scorn to see a *roué* or a debauchee above him in the one quality, while he would grieve to see a woman his superior in the other. It is he who has an eye for the world’s beauty, while he has an arm for the world’s work, not believing that coarseness is a necessary element of strength, or weakness the constant attendant of goodness. When young men shall put such an ideal before them, Don Juan and Pelham will go out of fashion, but we shall have all the more men.

But there is yet another reason for this false notion, and that is to be found in our old Puritan-Calvinist ideas of religion. I do not wonder that young men and men of the world are disgusted with the very name, when the only idea they have of it is embodied in an Orthodox deacon. The

Puritan religion of these days is Puritanism with everything that made it valuable left out. It is *not* stern adherence to unpopular opinions; it is *not* readiness to sacrifice everything for unpopular truth; it is not firm faith, unwavering trust in God's good providence, and the strong determination to do great duties at every cost. These are the qualities which made our Puritan fathers venerable and great: we can pardon many errors and much imperfection for their sake. But the errors without the greatness, how can we tolerate that?—the dead observance of dead forms, the slavish adherence to the "letter that killeth," the grim and bloody superstition that defends the gallows and finds no sin in slavery, the sour suspicion of innocent amusement, the long faces and prayers in the market-place;—when these are made the substance of religion, let me be an "infidel."* It is the "inclemency of the godly" that has made many a young man far worse.

* I think it necessary here to state, that when, a few pages back, I described the good young man as "studying Divinity," I by no means meant that all preachers of religion were of that class; and that, a little farther on, when I described another class as just fit to become merchants, I by no means meant that all or the best merchants were from that class. Likewise here, by "infidel," I wish to be understood as meaning a *modern* infidel,—that is to say, one who does *not* believe in a God who could utter that awful sentiment, "Whoso sheddeth blood," &c., or in a God who, according to the statement of a noted (or notorious) southern Unitarian divine, is "the great slaveholder"; one who does not believe that the whale swallowed Jonah, but who does *practically* believe that we should love God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves; these being essentially the distinctions between modern infidels and *modern* Christians.

If I did not know from experience the way in which people understand what they call "sweeping" assertions, and how they insist upon believing, when a man says, for instance, "that political parties are corrupt," that he means there is not a single honest man in them, I should have thought it necessary to write this note.

I have said that I did not believe in the excessive and ungovernable heat of youthful blood. Do not suppose that I make no distinction between youth and age. But I maintain that, to a young man whose thoughts are filled with high purposes, to one who has marked out for himself the plan of a manly and useful life, — above all, to him who has been accustomed to the society of virtuous and refined women, — vice has no attractions, but is wholly and absolutely disgusting. I am almost ashamed to utter such a truism ; and yet it is no part of the creed of what are called men of the world, who practically believe that a certain degree of carefully concealed vice is not only pardonable, but necessary. Shame upon “respectable” physicians who countenance such an unscientific as well as immoral theory. He is an atheist; and the only true infidel, who believes that God has ever rendered necessary a hair’s-breadth deviation from the line of perfect rectitude and purity. I will allow that licentiousness is a sin which should be guarded against while yet a long way off,—that, where this is not done, young men may be placed in circumstances, the consequences of slight, but imperceptibly increasing deviations from perfect purity, where they will be tried as with fire. But they *may* be tried as with fire, and yet come off conquerors. Strength of temptation may be pleaded in extenuation, *never* in excuse, for sin.

Few young men justly appreciate one great mischief which indulgence in vice accomplishes ; and yet, if they did, it would be an argument of peculiar force to them. I mean the effect it has in unfitting them for virtuous and refined female society. They may hide their sins never so carefully, the effect, in lowering the tone of their mind, they cannot hide ; and, spite of all their efforts to please, there will be a secret and instinctive repulsion in the mind of a

delicate and pure-hearted girl, that will raise an insurmountable barrier against all intimate acquaintance. What community of feeling can such a man have with Milton's "virgin, wise and pure"? How would the "learned and the manly soul" of Ben Jonson's Countess discern, as with an eagle's eye, his degradation! — for it is a soul, too,

"fair, and free, and wise,
Of greatest blood, and yet more *good* than great."

Can such a young man *love*, — can his be that

"smooth and steadfast mind,"

those

"gentle thoughts and calm desires,"

that

"essence gentle, fine,
Pure, perfect, nay, divine,
That golden chain let down from heaven,"

which is true love? No. Set it down as an immutable law of your mental constitution, that any amount of indulgence in low passions takes just so much away from your power of appreciating and enjoying what is pure.

I feel hardly qualified to speak to you on the subject of society. When I was in college, I was a melancholy dyspeptic, with few acquaintances, and no intimate friends. I can only say, as the result of that experience, If you would not go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death while yet on earth, be not as I was. Some young men avoid society from fear of its temptations, others that they may the easier cultivate studious habits, others from bashfulness and *mauvaise honte*. Not one of these reasons is a good one. It is but a sickly virtue that grows always in the shade; it is a pedantic and useless learning that is drawn wholly from books; and, for *mauvaise honte*, count no pain

too great that helps you to get rid of it. Have that robustness of mind that can pass with equal ease from study to society, and from society back again, uncaptivated and unenthralled, to the solitude and toil of thought. Be not an awkward pedant in the drawing-room, nor effeminate and only a kid-glove dilettante among your books; but let there be no situation, in solitude or in society, where you cannot equally approve yourself a man.

In proceeding to speak of study, it is not my intention to attempt a criticism of your college course, or to discuss at length any of the vexed questions which belong to it. I wish rather to speak generally of the state of mind in which you should enter on your labors, and the spirit and aims with which you should pursue them. This may sound somewhat vague, but there is a good deal lies behind it.

In the first place, then, I would respectfully inquire, whether you have become a man yet, or whether you are still only a larger-sized school-boy. I do not mean to ask whether your voice has changed, or whether the skirts of your coat are at a reasonable distance from the ground, or whether you have learned to smoke a cigar without ill consequences. These all are very uncertain signs, especially the last. The change from boyhood to young-manhood takes place at very different periods in different individuals: in some it never takes place at all, so that occasionally you see an overgrown school-boy dropping into his grave at the mature age of three-score years and ten. In some cases it is the result of the gradual influence of the discipline of college life; in some it is the sudden effect of the Commencement parchment; but in perhaps the majority of cases, it does not occur without an intermediate period of *puppyism*. It was, I suppose, this last fact which led Carlyle to ex-

press the savage wish that all young men might be safely put away under barrels from the age of sixteen, till they emerged, sadder and wiser men, at twenty-one. I do not agree with Carlyle in this: I would have only the puppies thus put away, and should not object to having them remain imbarrelled an indefinite length of time. But, waiving for the present the discussion of puppies, let me ask again whether you are a school-boy or a young man, or whether you know the vast difference there is between them. If I were to attempt to define it, that might perhaps be best and shortest done by saying, that the school-boy *learns lessons*, the young man *studies*. Now if I have any advice to give you on the subject of study, it is, to do the latter, and not the former. As a school-boy, you had faith that what your master gave you was the proper thing to learn, and you learned it undoubtingly, and received your due reward in praise and prizes. Observe, I am far from commending this ideal of a school-boy; but such, now-a-days, he generally is. As a young man, you should study, not by faith, but by sight, intelligently, and with some clear idea of that comprehensive whole, an Education. You have passed from under a "master"; you are no longer clay in the hands of the potter. You are become, to a great degree, an independent being, and your own governor and guide. It is a position of responsibility and danger, one which it will take all your manliness to fill; but the world does not furnish a position equal to that of an American young man just beginning life. In the old world, you would be bound down by old custom and prescription, by tyrannical laws, and the unbroken force of old abuses; your mind would be fettered, your personal liberty encroached on, your sphere of action confined. Either this would be the case, or you would be thrown, unripe and unprepared, into a sea of anarchy, to add one

more element to that confusion from which you could only hope that your children, or your children's children, would realize a new and better order. How different is it here! That sad and confused work of anarchy and revolution has been happily accomplished, and an idea of freedom new in the world's history has been realized.* The feudal barriers and tyrannical laws of caste, under which the old world suffers, have been swept away, and the chains of custom here are light and easily broken by a strong spirit. You have an unbounded prospect before you, and you are free. In the strength of the morning you stand ready girt for a journey, where no frowning walls shall bar your progress, no *invincible* enemy meet you. It behoves you to feel the responsibility of your position, and the discipline it requires. Some may think that this picture belongs more fittingly to the end than to the beginning of your college course; but if college is to be anything to you but a larger sort of school, with masters and rods, you need it *now*.

I counsel you, then, to use a large degree of independence. Dangerous counsel this, some grave heads will say. I shall try not to bring the reproaches of your respected professors upon me, but I adhere to my counsel: let me say what I do *not* mean by it. I do not mean that you should think yourself wiser than your teachers, and, when you differ, consider the presumption to be always in your favor. I mean that you should greatly respect their opinion, first as that of

* In saying this, I by no means forget our Slavery, nor how much depends, as to the *how* and the *when* of its abolition, on the earnest and devoted effort of every sincere man. But it is doomed to perish, and that speedily. There is an ideal of Freedom to be realized in the future destiny of this country, such as the world has not yet seen, and its coming is not for ever to be hindered by such a decrepit abomination as Chattel Slavery.

older, secondly, of wiser, and thirdly, of perhaps better men than you are. But I mean that you should not hold it infallible, first, because it is the opinion of old, and therefore (by their leave) probably a little old-fashioned men; secondly, because it is that of men who have mainly achieved their learning, and, of course, have necessarily acquired some fixed errors and prejudices with it; and thirdly, because it is the opinion of imperfect men, and sometimes of men of great and glaring imperfections. I counsel you therefore to use, not an independence that would make you a candidate for one of the before-mentioned barrels, but a serious and respectful independence, the independence of one who is in earnest.

And to apply this to study, — all learning is not necessarily included in the college course that may be marked out for you: perhaps the best part of learning is not. I know this is delicate ground, but I must hazard the indignation of old-world scholars, by saying, that I do not think the course of studies in our colleges is as well adapted to the wants of American life and American men of the nineteenth century as it might be. It is too scholastic; it savours of monks and the Middle Ages still. It is not so much in the studies, which must be much the same at all times, as it is in the relative importance given to them, and the consequent *tone* of the college course. I certainly shall not enter at large upon the question of the value of the ancient languages. I will only say, Study them, by all means, and study them well and thoroughly. I do not say, as many do, Make yourself a tolerable scholar in them, and then study other things. I say, Make yourself a *good* and *thorough* scholar in them, and study other things none the less. You can do this. See what a bagatelle Milton makes of learning the ancient languages in his Tractate of Education! He was writing for

men, but so am I. I know the suspicion in which the ancient languages are held by practical men, and I would be the last to sacrifice more practically useful knowledge to them; but there is no need of any such sacrifice. It is not the good Latin and Greek scholar who is a laughing-stock on 'Change, and helpless in a desert island; it is the pedant who knows nothing else. Latin and Greek do not hurt a man on 'Change, or in desert islands. Indeed, Cicero has a discussion not uninteresting to forestallers, and Polyphemus might have given Robinson Crusoe hints relative to the making of cheese.

I say, then, study the classics thoroughly, but in a large and liberal way. Do not view them as so many magazines of dead words, but try to imbue your mind with their spirit. Learn to feel their beauty and strength; view them as pictures of the once living mind of noble nations, and by their help recall and people the past with the great forms of hero, philosopher, and poet. Subordinate the letter to the spirit, but *know the letter well*, or you will lose both letter and spirit.

I fear you will not get much assistance in this method of study from college teachers. In my time, their idea of their duty seemed to be, that of being the passive recipients of certain words, and only the active givers of certain marks, — very seldom of any *remarks*. But college may have changed in this respect, for my time was a *great* while ago.

I think, too, it cannot be denied, that, in the relative importance attributed to Latin and Greek in comparison with other studies, our colleges are behind the times. It is not that they pay too much attention to the former; it is that they pay *too little* to the latter. See what minute and long-continued diligence shall be expended on the Greek accents and Latin verse, how little a young man shall often know of

anything else ! A professor and a tutor apiece shall not be thought enough for these branches, while a single teacher shall do all the Elocution, History, Political Economy, and Constitutional Law of two classes. It is in this disproportion that our colleges show their antiquated spirit. Such an arrangement belongs to times when Greek and Latin were the necessary implements of all science, and all intellectual intercourse, not to times when they are only the recreation of scholars, or grist for the school-master's mill. See, too, the neglect of the natural sciences, those noble and beautiful productions of modern times, far more talked about than studied ! Even where special provision is made for them, they seem still to languish, like shoots grafted upon a foreign and unnatural trunk.

I counsel you, then, not to be governed slavishly by the tone and spirit of your college, but to choose independently what course seems to you best, with the light of all the best advice you can in any way obtain. And here again I must say what I do not mean by this. Many young men, when they talk about consulting their tastes and genius in their studies, mean studying what gives them the least possible labor, or no labor at all ; — dabbling in belles-lettres, setting up for poets on a stock of bad sonnets, or idling away their time in " philosophical " meditation. The Transcendental doctrine of inspiration, or " spontaneity," half true as it is, (and the better half,) has yet done much mischief in this way, by being taken for the whole truth ; and interesting youths have thought themselves on the high road to greatness, if they only let their hair grow, and dreamed about the fields in search of inspiration. The lucubrations of some of them are extant, a wonder to future generations. I knew one once, who, not having current coin, 'dair' his tailor by his life," — that is to say, by the exam-

ple, not the loss, of it, — which was certainly a small estimate to put upon his tailor's services. Work! you might as well say a genius should not eat as that he should not work. Work is the very nourishment of genius, — it is what makes it *strong*. Did not Shakspeare work, think you, — or Milton? Theirs was certainly not pedant's work, but it was a toil the pedant never dreamed of. Do not, then, make the consulting of your genius a pretext for avoiding hard work. If you have a genius, you will spoil it; and if you have not, what will become of you? •

In nothing is this error seen so frequently as in the neglect of the Mathematics. Indeed, it is getting to be a very common opinion that only a favored few have any capacity whatever for mathematical studies; and we sometimes see the doctrine countenanced in very high places. I am a very small person, but I do not agree with it. What are the Mathematics, when viewed rightly, but the laws by which the universe is built and governed? And is it credible that God should have given the capacity of understanding them to only a chosen and favored few? This seems to me to be carrying the doctrine of election quite too far. I can well believe, that, to the majority of students, the Mathematics are *hard work*. I had no harder, but I had none more profitable; and I am inclined to think that they are profitable just in proportion as they prove difficult. The mind that finds difficulty in them, shows by that that it is not accustomed to the habits of method and laborious exactness which their successful pursuit requires. But who will say that the acquiring of such habits will be an injury to any, even the finest mind? Of course, I do not mean that every one can aim at reading the *Mécanique Céleste*. That high pleasure, as I can well imagine it to be, is doubtless reserved for a favored few, as are all the highest delights of genius; but

that *every* young man will not be the better for a pretty large infusion of Mathematics into his college course, is what I find it very difficult to be convinced of.

Your text-books may be a stumbling-block, for they may possibly be the work of a really great mathematical genius, — the last man who should be made to write elementary books. If that should be the case, do not be afraid of elucidating them by text-books that are not in your college course, — they will not bite you, though they may not belong to your college, — or by following another than the college course. Make sure of your Mathematics, even though you should have to set “marks” at defiance.

History, too, is a study sadly neglected; not so much, however, from want of genius in the students as in the writers of it. The reading of English “standard” History is indeed dreary and heavy work; but there are already fine models of every kind of historical writing in French, and even in our language the dawn of a better day has appeared. Here, too, I advise you not to shun hard work, till by it you have attained liberal and philosophical views of History.

If there is one subject more than another on which I would counsel you to use an independent judgment, it is in your estimate and appreciation of the Fine Arts. Set yourself above the lowness of our Yankee standard. Consider Art not as an ornamental superfluity of life, but the study of it as an essential part of a true education. Try to attain a true taste and an elevated standard. Do not limit your ideas of architecture to a New England meeting-house, — even a “Gothic” one, — or of music to the singing that is performed therein. Study Art deeply, drink in its spirit, and make it a part of your daily life. For is it not, viewed rightly, the purest and highest expression of all that is deepest in man? It is not

Religion, but it is one of the highest expressions of Religion, as of everything else that is pure and beautiful in the soul. You will always remain one-sided, lame, and imperfect, if you do not cultivate your love of beauty; and be sure that there is no study which gives such large returns of the truest happiness as this.

Of the various forms of Art, there are two that are always within your reach, Music and Poetry. Do not limit your ideas of music by the pretty face of the newest opera singer, or even by her most elaborate trill, but enter, though it cost you care and labor, into its grand, and solemn, and beautiful depths. Consider time not lost that is spent in acquiring some practical facility on an instrument. I regret no defect in my own education so much. If I were not too old now, I would begin to learn to-morrow.

And for Poetry, which a distinguished modern philosopher places, and rightly, it seems to me, at the head of all the Fine Arts,—with the wealth of English literature before you, you should be ashamed not to be, I do not say a poet, but a lover of true Poetry. If you have no taste for it,—and there are some such,—acquire one: or rather find, deep buried beneath the rubbish of your mind, that taste which is inborn. Begin with what you can appreciate, and labor, though it be with painful steps and slow, up to some far-off appreciation of the mighty masters of poetic inspiration. But always prefer to be a lover of good, rather than a maker of bad poetry.

To pass to other topics. It seems to be a general and inevitable law, at least in this country, that colleges must be conservative and sectarian. Given the position at any moment of the really leading minds of the community, and you shall find the position of its colleges by going *back* a greater or less distance from that point. This is perhaps

inevitable, though, as regards the sectarianism, it certainly is not right. May we some day or other see an American *university*, in the true meaning of the term, that shall be free to all opinions, open to the teaching of all creeds, and where the teacher's success shall depend on the amount of truth he holds, and his fidelity in imparting it! But till that time comes, you will find, that, even where no direct efforts are made to influence your opinions, some care is needed to guard against the undue influence of the *tone* of your college. Do not, then, be afraid of heretical books or heretical teachers. The truth that is heresy now may be counted orthodox by the time you are Senior, — will be pretty sure to be by the time your son is Freshman. When I was in college, Locke on the Human Understanding was the time-honored oracle in mental philosophy; Cousin's masterly criticism of him was a heretical book: and Paley's contemptible doctrines usurped the place of Moral Philosophy. Since then, Locke has been banished to the shades to which he had long been due, and Paley has given place, I trust, to real morality.

Need I say I do not mean that you should think doctrines true because they are heretical, or false because they happen to be counted orthodox? I only mean that you should not allow laziness or prejudice or fear to hinder you from proving all things and holding fast *only* to what is good. The mind that cannot look impartially at both sides of a question is a feeble and sickly one; the doctrine that cannot bear examination — pardon the truism — is a weak one. We do not build strong ships to breast the Atlantic out of the lithe and slender saplings that shoulder each other in the dense wood, but of the noble pasture oak that flings its boughs abroad to every quarter of the heavens, and is visited by every wind that blows.

Be impartial, then, but don't be so everlastingly impartial that you never have an opinion of your own. There is a class of impartial men, the height of whose philosophy is the maxim that there are a great many arguments on both sides of the question. So far as they are concerned, there might as well be none on either. There is doubtless some truth in both sides of all questions; it is by virtue of that that there are two sides; but the *preponderance* of truth is always on one, and it is your business to find out that. Shall I tell you what I think is the capital maxim by which to be guided, at least in all questions involving human interests? It is to keep, not your head, for that will keep itself, but your *heart*, right, and clear vision shall always be given you. To many minds it is a great mystery, this wide and infinite confusion of opinion. Some are even led by it to doubt whether there is any such thing as absolute truth. But follow men to their homes, and watch them in their daily life, and you will find a solution of the enigma. Are not some men passionate, others morose, others selfish, others impure? And not a man indulges in a vice that does not tell upon his reason. The tyrannical man shall defend slavery, the impure man shall doubt of purity, the selfish man shall be skeptical of goodness. Even their bodily health shall influence their philosophy. It were a curious question, and one not unworthy of investigation, whether Calvin was not a dyspeptic.

Keep a sound and generous heart, then, if you would have a clear and truth-discerning head. But what is this but to repeat the maxim of the greatest of all teachers. "If any man will do the will of Him that sent me, he shall know of my doctrine whether it be of God."

I have been giving you advice, that, I am aware, will not make you a student after every professor's own heart. The teacher who is content with the perfunctory performance of

his routine of duties will find you perhaps troublesome, and difficult to deal with. I will not insult any true teacher by supposing that he will object to the character I have attempted to draw. I have spoken slightly, too, of certain parts of college machinery, and particularly of the system of "marks." I do confess that I hold them in small reverence, reckoning them as rather belonging to a college in embryo than to one fully grown. I suppose it is "dangerous" advice; but I would be so intent upon my studies as not to inquire or think about my "marks." Remember Landor's fine aphorism, "If thou lovest Glory, thou must trust her truth. She followeth him who doth not turn and gaze after her." This is true of college as of all other glory; so that, even if your only object were to gain the right to Cicero's boast, that you were paid every possible honor the first moment it became due, the surest way would be, to be so intent on that which would make you deserving of them as to forget all about them. Be not, then, painfully anxious about the Greek particles, and sit not up all night lest you should miss prayers, only that you may have a "Detur," and be chosen into the Phi Beta Kappa among the first eight. Get a "Detur" by all means, and the square medal with its cabalistic signs, the sooner the better; but do not "stoop and lie in wait" for them. Be one

"Whom honors follow, on whose head they fall
Like showers of manna, if they come at all."

Be too much in love with Learning, be too earnest in the race of life, to be drawn aside by any such golden apples, for after all they will prove to be but *gilded* ones.

Do not suppose that I am counselling neglect of what are called college duties. I hold, if not to that maxim which goes by the name of Paul, — though I doubt whether that brave

spirit ever wrote it as we have it,—yet to a modification of it. However sturdily you may resist the powers that be in a case of conscience, be obedient in non-essentials. Till college, then, shall be wise enough to substitute some manual exercise or drill parade for what are called morning and evening prayers, I would be present there with my body, whatever I might be doing with my mind. Moreover, there is a real use, even in such ceremonials. Attendance at morning prayers, so called, necessitates early rising, which indeed I take to be the object chiefly aimed at by them, and attendance at any stated place at a stated time, if it be only to do nothing and then go away again, helps you in the formation of regular and orderly habits. Do not think it a mark of genius, as some youths do, to be irregular and disorderly. It will be a long time, even with your best efforts, before you learn the full value of method.

I have thus, as well as these brief pages allow, sketched faintly, and more by implication than directly, some of the qualities that go to make up the character of a true scholar. If you think that to realize that character will be an easy thing, you will make a great mistake; but if you think that to realize it will be a painful and disagreeable thing, you will make a great mistake also. It is the hardest thing in life to be a man, but it is also the grandest and most satisfactory. But the most essential point in the manly character I have reserved for the last. You will not, I think, after reading what precedes, suspect me of cant or hypocrisy, if I speak of religion. Let me say, then, that you cannot be a man without it. I do not mean, by religion, belief in the “thirty-nine” or any other number of articles, or fellowship with a sectarian church; or singing Dr. Watts’s Psalms and Hymns, or membership in a Society for Religious Improvement. I think a truly religious man, under

present circumstances, will not have a great deal to do with any of these. But I do mean a deep, firm, reverential trust in God, a realizing faith that he is our Father, a readiness to approach him in times of difficulty and trial. If you have never been in circumstances where you could not but pray, where every other resource failed you, and you would have despaired without that, you have the deepest experiences of life yet to go through. If you have never met with any happiness you could not but thank God for, you have the deepest joys of life yet in store for you. Be sure of one thing, that, without religion, your best resolutions, your highest ideal of manliness, will be but chaff before the whirlwind of passion, when that comes; that nothing but the granite hardness of religious principle can resist the slow but certain and mighty force of degradation the world possesses.

I know of nothing so difficult to write about as this. Cant has monopolized language: one can scarcely write words that do not savour of revivals and prayer-meetings. Learn to judge men by their works, and understand how great a part of outward religion is superstition or pretence; but do not, for that, doubt, as many do, of real religion. Above all, do not fall into that error of weak and shallow minds, that there is anything in religion at variance with strength and manliness of character. Manliness! — it is the very essence of it, to be dependent on God and independent of all the world beside.

Religious books are mostly a weariness and a nuisance; but there are some that have come from the depths of men's souls. Seek these out; and, above all, pierce through — and it is no easy task — all the veils that the priestcraft and superstition of nineteen centuries have wrapped about it, to the great, and manly, and venerable soul of Jesus. His words — I say it all the more sincerely for believing little or noth-

ing of the stories of his wonderful works — are the best manual of a manly life that you will anywhere find.

But do not keep your religion to yourself. Use it, not in long prayers in the public meetings, not in keeping a solemn face on Sunday, but show it in *active love of your fellow-men*. This will require some little independence on your part, for most of the modes of real usefulness are very unpopular things, — unpopular just in proportion to the *reality* of their usefulness. But let your activity be joined with modesty. It is not likely that you are destined to be a great deliverer of the world, though some young men, in the first warmth of their zeal, act as if they thought so.

What shall you do if you fail? I have not written this with the idea that you will always be successful, for you will not. But if you are not, then I say, with the least possible loss of effort, with the least possible alteration of your course, *try again*, and again, and ever again. The waves will often roll over your head; but buffet them with strong arms and a resolute heart, and you will surely come to land. The manliness of a man is in nothing so certainly shown as in his *power of perseverance*. Life is no easy thing. Some men grieve that it is not all a garden of roses; but

“ Give me a spirit that on Life’s rough sea
Loves to have his sails filled with a lusty wind,
Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,
And his rapt ship run on her side so low
That she drinks water, and her keel ploughs air.
There is no danger to a man that knows
What life and death is; neither is it lawful
That he should stoop to any other law :
He goes before them and commands them all
That to himself is a law rational.”

Live in this spirit, and you shall be sure to make a near approach to that ideal that should be always before you, — the ideal of a Perfect Scholar and a Perfect Man.









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